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New York

President:	Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein	(Jordan)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sul Kyung-hoon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/787)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of welcome to new members and of thanks to outgoing members of the Council

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As this is the first formal meeting of the Security Council this year, I would like to extend my warm wishes on the occasion of the New Year to all members of the Security Council, the Secretariat and the United Nations as a whole.

In presiding over the first formal meeting of the Council in 2014, I am happy to welcome the other new members, namely, Chad, Chile, Lithuania and Nigeria. We all look forward to their participation in the work of the Council. Their experience and wisdom will be of invaluable assistance in the discharge of the Council's responsibilities.

I also take this opportunity to express the Council's gratitude to the outgoing members — Azerbaijan, Guatemala, Morocco, Pakistan and Togo — for their important contributions to the work of the Council during their terms in 2012 and 2013.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I also take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Gérard Araud, Permanent Representative of France, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of December 2013. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing my deep appreciation to Ambassador Araud and his team for successfully conducting the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/787)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome the presence of Her Excellency Ms. Léonie Banga-Bothy, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/787, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: The situation in the Central African Republic has deteriorated greatly since the most recent United Nations briefing to the Security Council (see S/PV.7069). The attacks by the anti-Balaka against Bangui on 5 December triggered a period of heavy unrest in the capital and in the interior of the country. In Bangui alone, more than 750 casualties have been confirmed, and the death toll outside Bangui is likely to be substantial.

According to the latest information, approximately 2.2 million people in the Central African Republic need humanitarian assistance, that is, close to half of the population of the country. One in every two inhabitants of Bangui has sought refuge outside their homes. Their number is estimated at approximately 513,000, of whom 100,000 are at a makeshift camp at the airport.

Killings in Bangui and in the rest of the country continue every day, and the population remains divided along religious affiliation. Access to residential neighbourhoods in Bangui is controlled either by "anti-Christian" or "anti-Muslim" checkpoints, manned by armed civilians. Similarly, localities outside Bangui — such as Bossangoa, Bouar, Bozoum and Paoua, among others — witness atrocities on a daily basis, including direct clashes between Christian and Muslim communities. The danger of escalation into sustained violence along religious lines remains real, with the potential for long-term danger to the country.

Several countries, including Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, have repatriated tens of thousands of their citizens, the vast majority of whom are Muslims. That is the first time in the history of the Central African Republic that people have felt obliged to leave the country for fear for their lives on account of their religion.

The quick deployment by the African Union (AU) and France, respectively, of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and Operation Sangaris prevented the situation from degenerating into higher levels of conflict and atrocities. The speed at which both forces attained operational level and their subsequent deployment have changed the security dynamics in Bangui, with visible patrols being undertaken by both forces. As MISCA continues to work towards reaching its authorized strength of 6,000, its presence will be increased outside of Bangui, thus contributing to the improvement of the security situation in the countryside.

We greatly appreciate the role of African States and France in the committing troops to the Central African Republic. I would like, at this stage, to pay tribute to the African and French soldiers who have fallen while performing their duties in the name of peace. The role played by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and by its individual member States to bring stability to the Central African Republic should also be commended.

Currently, we are working with the African Union on the organization of the donors conference that the Council requested to support MISCA. It will be held on 1 February at Addis Ababa on the margins of the AU Summit. We count on the generous support of Council members and other States and organizations.

The events of 5 December dealt a serious blow to the transitional authorities, and to the Head of State of the Transition in particular. The inability of the transitional authorities to curb widespread Séléka human rights abuses and violations against Christian populations over the past year contributed to the gradual transformation of local self-defence groups — the anti-Balaka — into a full-blown rebellion. As a result of its predominantly Muslim composition, Séléka abuses against the Christian populations in the Central African Republic were quickly interpreted as a religious conflict pitting Muslins against Christians. The international commission of inquiry to be established in accordance with resolution 2127 (2013) is a most welcome development that will certainly look into those and other abuses and human rights violations.

On the other hand, the frustration of Muslim communities in the Central African Republic is the result of years of marginalization by successive Governments since the country's independence, more than 50 years ago. For instance, while the Muslim community represents an estimated 20 per cent of the total population of the Central African Republic, no Muslim holidays are observed officially by the country.

I would like to commend the Forum of Religious Leaders for their laudable efforts and sacrifices and for their proactive approach in trying to appease tensions among communities. The Forum brings together the Archbishop, the Imam and a Pastor of Bangui. They need support as a matter of urgency to be able to carry on with their efforts.

ECCAS Heads of State have proposed an inclusive national conference, which should serve as a forum for all the national actors to share their frustrations, identify the country's challenges and, hopefully, agree on the way forward, including preparing for elections and determining a common set of priorities for the post-transition period.

Concerning the elections, some progress was made with the adoption of a new electoral code and the swearing in of the seven-member National Electoral Authority, which brings together representatives of civil society, the political parties and the Government. The United Nations mission on the ground — the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic — is providing technical and logistics support to the National Electoral Authority. We will soon deploy an electoral needs assessment mission. Conditions conducive to holding elections, however, remain elusive. The systematic looting of all local administrations and the destruction by the ex-Séléka of all types of civil national registries means that reconstituting the voters lists would require a massive effort.

The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of all armed groups should constitute one of the top priorities. We must learn from our past experiences in the Central African Republic and from the several DDR programmes carried out there. We must ensure that the conditions conducive to such an exercise are present, including the requisite amount of funding.

A DDR process implemented in accordance with internationally accepted standards is critical. It will pave the way for holistic security sector reforms and contribute to laying the foundations for lasting peace.

Allow me now to say a few words about the humanitarian situation, which has deteriorated at an alarming rate. All Central Africans have been affected by the crisis. As I mentioned at the outset, nearly half of the population needs humanitarian assistance. Persistent violence has forced one fifth of the population to flee their homes. That number has more than doubled since 5 December. More than 935,000 people are now sleeping outside or in temporary spaces. In Bangui, half of the population has sought refuge at one of 55 sites for internally displaced persons. More than 100,000 people are seeking security at the airport alone. Those displaced urgently need protection and shelter, as well as access to water, health care, food, basic supplies and sanitation and hygiene services.

Non-governmental organization (NGO) partners and staff of United Nations humanitarian agencies, funds and programmes have remained in the Central African Republic to deliver assistance in what is a very dangerous and unpredictable environment. The increase in violence last month has exacerbated the needs. Working closely with civil society and religious leaders from all communities, NGOs and United Nations staff are tirelessly providing medical care and delivering supplies to hospitals, health centres and dispensaries at internally displaced person sites.

On 11 December, the United Nations activated a system-wide level 3 emergency response. That allows us to send our most experienced and skilful staff, release emergency funds and mobilize relief supplies and pipelines. Since then, a senior humanitarian coordinator at the level of Assistant Secretary-General has been deployed to strengthen the humanitarian response in the country. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos allocated $10 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support relief efforts in the Central African Republic. United Nations agencies have also ramped up their responses.

Despite the tremendous efforts of humanitarians on the ground, needs continue to outpace the response. Violence and insecurity have forced many to flee into forests and out of reach of aid. A lack of funding has also constrained the response and threatens to further inhibit humanitarian operations unless funding is urgently received. For example, without additional contributions, the World Food Programme food pipeline for the Central African Republic will be 90 per cent depleted in February.

The humanitarian country team has developed a 100-day plan for priority humanitarian action, which is part of the broader 2014 response strategy. The plan requires $152 million to rapidly scale up life-saving assistance and protection. Last year's humanitarian appeal for the Central African Republic was one of the most underfunded appeals globally, and the competing needs worldwide are by no means less burdensome this year.

I cannot conclude my remarks without making reference to protection issues, notably those affecting women and children, who always bear the brunt in conflict situations. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Leila Zerrougui, the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General for the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, and a representative of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict conducted a joint assessment mission to the Central African Republic from 17 to 21 December. The joint mission called for urgent action to protect civilians, in particular women and children, and to prevent the country from plunging into full-scale sectarian conflict. The United Nations has also undertaken missions to places such as Bria, Bouar, Paoua, Bossangoa and Bambari. Through a concerted effort in the Central African Republic, we are finalizing support packages for the communities there. The same is being done for children in armed conflict.

Women and children constitute the most vulnerable group in society, and are therefore disproportionally affected by the dire humanitarian situation. Women and peace and security questions, as outlined in the seminal resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent related resolutions, have always guided our actions in the search for solutions in the Central Africa Republic. I am pleased to see that the donor community is paying increased attention to the Central Africa Republic, which, we hope, will result in desperately needed additional resources.

The violence and the atrocities in the Central Africa Republic must stop. Those in positions of authority or influence must do more to end violence and halt grave

violations against civilians, including children. Attacks against humanitarian personnel and the use of civilian spaces such as schools and hospitals for military purposes must also end. I ask the Council to again remind all parties to the conflict of their responsibilities under international humanitarian and human rights law and to ensure that all those responsible for violations are held to account.

There is a very real risk that the crisis could spread beyond the country's borders and further destabilize the region. The United Nations, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central Africa Republic, will continue to do its best to prevent the situation in the Central Africa Republic from unravelling further and human rights abuses and violations from reaching unthinkable levels; ensure humanitarian aid for the most vulnerable; and return the country to constitutional order. Here at Headquarters, the Deputy Secretary-General regularly chairs a senior action group to consider how best to respond to the multifaceted crisis in the Central Africa Republic. This is the first case for the Secretary-General's new Rights Upfront agenda.

In conclusion, let me note that it is our collective responsibility to act now, before it is too late.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Chad.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like, at the start of the new year, to wish all members of the Security Council the best of health and greatest success in their work. I also take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt and warm congratulations to your country, Sir, upon its election to the Council and upon your assumption of the presidency. My delegation assures you of its support and we wish you the greatest of success.

I would like to highly commend Mr. Gérard Araud, Permanent Representative of France and outgoing President of the Council, for the excellent work achieved under his leadership, the results of which are more than clear.

My delegation is delighted to be serving on the Security Council as a non-permanent member. We take this opportunity to thank all of those who, by voting for us, contributed to our successful election. Likewise, we warmly congratulate all newly elected members, that is, Nigeria, Chile, Jordan and Lithuania. My delegation pledges to spare no effort in contributing to the smooth functioning of the work of the Security Council and its subsidiary organs.

I would also like to thank and congratulate Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing, which indeed covered almost everything that I had wanted to say.

Chad is profoundly concerned at the situation in the Central Africa Republic, in particular at the scale of the crisis in the country and the and ever-more dangerous developments we continue to see — all in spite of the robust mandate entrusted to the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and other forces involved there through resolution 2127 (2013), adopted on 5 December 2013. While the situation seems to be showing the early signs of improvement in certain areas, the violent attacks being committed against the civilian population in general and foreign nationals in particular have not decreased at all. On the contrary, the situation continues to be characterized by widespread insecurity, massacres, rape and acts of brutality that further expose civilian populations already displaced en masse into makeshift camps, as well as by the massive wholesale exodus of foreign nationals to their countries of origin, including Chadians, Cameroonians, Senegalese, Malians and many others.

Chad deplores the fact that the situation has claimed scores of dead and hundreds of missing persons among its nationals, and we continue to repatriate our nationals via charter flights and over-land transport. Like the nationals of other countries, Chadians have been dispossessed of their possessions and had their homes ransacked. Such hatred against all communities of foreign origin due to their belonging to a particular religion cannot be justified under any pretext and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

Nonetheless, the remarkable efforts being deployed by MISCA and the French forces to accomplish their mission, under what are extremely difficult and complex conditions, must be commended. In that regard, Chad welcomes the ongoing commitment of the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and France to achieve greater coordination of the efforts under way to help the Central African Republic to emerge definitively from the recurrent cycle of violence and political crisis. Against that backdrop,

Chad, together with other countries of Central Africa, is and will remain committed, as it has been since 1994, to supporting joint efforts to re-establish peace and stability in the Central African Republic. We will not allow ourselves to be distracted by the insidious media campaign craftily organized by power-hungry groups seeking to distort international public opinion by blurring the lines between Séléka and Muslims and Muslims and Chadians, without the slightest proof.

Like the countries of the Central Africa region, Chad is aware of the consequences of the crisis on its own security and stability and on the subregional economic integration process. The number of extraordinary ECCAS summits held on the subject of the Central African Republic since the outbreak of the crisis, the signing of the Libreville Global Peace Agreement, the implementation of the N'Djamena road map and the strengthening of the former Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic, which became MISCA on 19 December 2013 with additional contingents, are, among other things, tangible elements that reflect the determination and the degree of ECCAS's mobilization in its search for a solution to the crisis.

In same vein, ECCAS is preparing to hold another extraordinary summit in N'Djamena on 9 January with the participation of all international partners to address the situation in Central African Republic, including the lack of progress in the security and political fronts despite the deployment of MISCA and the French forces. It is obvious that the implementation of the recommended solutions lies first and foremost with the Central African political stakeholders. Without their robust and responsible involvement, it will be difficult to put an end to the cycle of violence and to move the political process forward.

In this war for power, where religion is deliberately exploited for political purposes and conducted by proxy militias, it is important that the Central African political class emerge from its lethargy and play its full role in order to save the country. To do so, MISCA and the other forces deployed in Central African Republic should continue their mission of the disarmament and cantonment of ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka to pacify the country and allow for the holding of free and transparent elections in a peaceful environment, in accordance with the Libreville Agreement and the N'Djamena road map.

In that light, Chad calls for greater mobilization by the entire international community, in particular the United Nations, the European Union and the Central African Republic's bilateral partners, to support the actions already undertaken on the ground by the African Union, ECCAS and France. Such a mobilization must take into account the need for a holistic approach supported by concurrent actions and based on the humanitarian situation on the ground, the protection of civilians, disarmament, the political transition process, the strengthening of administration and justice, national reconciliation and the establishment of a truly national army, which is the only guarantee of peace and stability in the country.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Minister for Foreign Affairs Banga-Bothy of the Central African Republic.

Ms. Banga-Bothy (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2014. I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor for his personal involvement in the process aimed at resolving the crisis in the Central African Republic. I would also like to express my best wishes for a happy new year to all Security Council members.

In his statement to the General Assembly on 26 September 2013, the Transitional Prime Minister of Central African Republic, His Excellency Mr. Nicolas Tiangaye, sounded the alarm regarding the possible chaos that could descend on the Central African Republic given the already extreme deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the country at that time (see A/68/PV.13). Given that horrifying prospect and the imminent sectarian war brewing among the beleaguered population, the prompt response of the international community — with the adoption of resolution 2121 (2013), which was to pave the way for international action, the re-establishment of peace and the provision of assistance to people at the mercy of armed groups and militias of all types — provided a glimmer of hope to the Central African Republic.

Unfortunately, as the Security Council was preparing to adopt resolution 2127 (2013), on 5 December 2013, the enemies of the Central African people, who perceived that resolution authorizing the application of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations as a threat to their bloody, diabolical

undertaking, chose to make themselves heard with weapons and attacked Bangui at dawn, causing the deaths of several hundred people. Although a robust reaction by defence and security forces was able to halt the attackers and limit the damage inflicted by the 5 December attack, the overall deterioration in the security situation, the resumption of violence and the subsequent senseless killing considerably worsened the humanitarian situation in the capital.

Like those who have spoken before me, I too can confirm that 300,000 people have had to flee their homes for camps because of the violence of those armed groups. Those men, women and children are living in dire conditions and are exposed to all sorts of violence, disease and famine. It appears that there is a real risk of large-scale outbreaks of infectious diseases, in particular cholera. For instance, the fact that people have huddled on the grounds of the Bangui M'Poko International Airport means that they are not only exposed to the scourges I have just mentioned, but also that their very security is threatened — as are airport facilities themselves.

Foreign persons of the Muslim faith have not been spared either. We would like to take this opportunity to express the official apologies of the Central African Republic to the States whose nationals have been submitted to abuse during these events.

Despite the efforts of non-governmental and humanitarian organizations and the agencies of the United Nations to provide people with the necessary assistance, the situation is only deteriorating further. Attention is entirely focused on Bangui, the scene of the most recent violence. The rest of the people in the hinterlands appear to be left to their sad fate. This shows the scope and seriousness of the situation, which requires additional efforts on the part of the international community.

Considerable efforts have been deployed on the security front, with a call for a cessation of hostilities and the beginning of negotiations with anti-Balaka self-defence groups — as evidenced repeatedly by our Head of State in extending the hand of friendship in the course of his addresses to the nation. Unfortunately, those irregular and unidentified forces have not shown any desire to engage in negotiations with the Government. Instead, they have continued to carry out senseless attacks against civilians, the bases of ex-Séléka elements and even contingents of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA).

Given the situation, religious authorities, both Christian and Muslim, have undertaken commendable efforts to try to bring together the leaders of the various communities in order to pursue a policy of national reconciliation. It must be acknowledged, however, that such work will be long-term in nature and require both patience and determination.

Moreover, with respect to the transitional bodies, it should be noted that all of the bodies provided for under the Transitional Charter have been established. The exception in that regard is the High Council for Communication, whose process is under way. The composition of the National Electoral Authority has just been voted upon, and that institution will soon become operational if the security situation in the country becomes stable.

The transitional authorities have also reaffirmed their commitment not to stand in the elections. They want the elections to be credible and transparent so as to lead to a final end to the repeated crises in the Central African Republic. That is why the elections must not be organized hastily, but rather on the basis of regular procedures, going through the various stages and in accordance with the various agreements signed in the context of the transition in the Central African Republic.

With regard to security, as I have already mentioned, the 5 December attack was a fatal blow to the efforts carried out until then. Despite the helpful actions of the French Operation Sangaris to initiate the disarmament of armed groups and the cantonment of most Séléka elements, the anti-Balaka militia and some elements answering to ex-Séléka leaders continue to sow terror in the various neighborhoods of Bangui, thereby preventing those who have sought refuge in the sites for displaced people to return to their homes and resume their normal lives.

Since the transition from the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) to MISCA on 19 November, a remarkable job has been done with the support of Operation Sangaris in the field. This has given some hope for the re-establishment of peace and security in the Central African Republic. The Mission, which is carried out pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), should in our view be accompanied by the action of the transitional

authorities themselves, which will require the Central African defence and security forces to work side by side with those of the international community to bring peace to the country.

As that noble task is carried out, we regret the loss of life of brave French soldiers in the context of Operation Sagaris and of Congolese and Chadian soldiers in the context of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic. Those men gave their lives to bring peace to the Central African Republic. We pay them a well-deserved tribute on behalf of the Head of State of the Transitional Government and of the people of the Central African Republic. I wish to pay my respects to the families of the disappeared and to their Goverments and countrymen.

Given the extreme nature of the crisis in the Central African Republic and the considerable means that will be necessary to end it, we ask the international community to increase the financial and logistic resources going to the forces on the ground in the Central African Republic. As provided for in resolution 2127 (2013), a United Nations peacekeeping operation in the current situation in the Central African Republic could, should conditions allow, provide considerable support for the efforts undertaken by the African Union, France and the other countries that are providing troops or resources.

The Central African Republic Government commends the African Union's commitment to increasing the number of MISCA personnel to 10,000 men within six months. I trust that, at this strength, MISCA will be able to cover the entire country of the Central African Republic and carry out its mission adequately. The assessment of MISCA's performance in this period will make it possible, if necessary, to adjust the approach and take appropriate action.

We also call for the strengthening of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic, with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General playing an extremely important role in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; in human rights and peacebuilding; and in the forthcoming organization of the elections in the near future.

While it is evident that, despite the extreme gravity of the situation in the Central African Republic, the people have bravely survived the chaos to date, it is to a large extent thanks to the tireless international solidarity provided to our people during the course of three decades of political and military violence. I thank all African States that have provided additional troops to MISCA in support of endeavours to re-establish peace and security in my country. I call for the timely organization of the donors conference desired not just by the African Union, but also by the authorities of the Central African Republic.

My thanks also go to the European Union and the United States of America for providing financial and logistical support and equipment to the stabilization efforts in the Central African Union.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

Mr. António (*spoke in French*): I should like to start by wishing Council members a very happy new year. I join the President in welcoming Her Excellency Ms. Léonie Banga-Bothy Mbazoa, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

I would also like to congratulate the delegation of Jordan on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Mr. President, as you just did, the delegation of France, for its presidency of the Security Council during December 2013.

I would also like to congratulate the other new members of the Security Council: Chad, Chile, Lithuania and Nigeria. I would like to especially congratulate the two African delegations that have joined the Council — Chad and Nigeria — whose work, alongside that of Rwanda, will raise the voice of Africa within the framework of the Security Council.

I thank Ambassador Feltman for his very comprehensive briefing, which painted a very detailed picture of the situation on the ground and the steps that need to be taken.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I would like to thank the Council for its invitation and for the opportunity afforded to the African Union to address this body on the situation in the Central African Republic. This meeting clearly reflects the Security Council's focused attention to the especially alarming developments that continue to unfold in that country.

As Council members know, on 19 July 2013 the Peace and Security Council of the African Union authorized the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and granted it a clear mandate to protect the civilian population and stabilize the security situation. The Peace and Security Council had asked the Security Council to support the deployment of MISCA and to take the measures needed to that effect. In that regard, I welcome the fact that, in its resolutions 2121 (2013) and 2127 (2013), the Council has supported and authorized the deployment of MISCA. That is a further illustration of the close partnership between the African Union and the United Nations.

On 19 December 2013, MISCA took over from the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). That transition was the result of intense consultations with the ECCAS, within the African Peace and Security Framework. I would like once again to express the appreciation of the African Union to ECCAS and MICOPAX for their work under particularly difficult conditions. It goes without saying that the cooperation between the African Union and ECCAS continues, given that the situation requires ongoing and active regional involvement and the mobilization of all of Africa's energy. As soon as it assumed authority, MISCA began working to build on the achievements attained by MICOPAX and effectively implement its mandate, guided by the concept of operations adopted in agreement with ECCAS.

I should like to underscore that MISCA's original plan was severely hindered by the attacks perpetrated on 5 December 2013 against Government forces by initially unidentified armed groups that were later determined to be of the so-called anti-Balaka group. Following those bloody events and through extended consultations between Heads of State of the region and African Union partners, the Peace and Security Council decided on 13 December 2013 to authorize an increase in the force strength of MISCA of up to 6,000 uniformed personnel, depending on developments in the situation on the ground. Clearly, like the French Operation Sangaris, MISCA embarked on its work in a particularly difficult environment, characterized by clashes between anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka forces, and sometimes between individuals.

This violence is all the more destabilizing and difficult to contain because it has assumed on a sectarian and religious character. Heinous crimes have been committed. Lynchings, summary executions, looting and destruction of property have increased. Tens of thousands of people have had to flee their homes to seek refuge in other areas of the city of Bangui considered safer, primarily the area surrounding the airport.

Since its inception, MISCA has had to take measures to address this situation. The reinforcement of ground personnel following the arrival of the Burundian contingent helped to contain the tide of violence and respond as best it could to the many demands on the MISCA forces — at times for escorts, at others to hold fixed points or secure commercial and public buildings. Positioned in various sites in the city of Bangui, MISCA troops deployed in the capital had initially held fixed points, while patrols were left to the elements of the Operation Sangaris, which were more mobile and equipped with adequate means of communication.

Since then, military and police forces have adopted new plans for dividing the territory in order to attain an adequate grip over Bangui and the rest of Central African territory. The imminent deployment of the Rwandan contingent and the provision of communication, mobility and protection equipment should allow MISCA to accelerate its securing of Bangui and embark on the second phase of deployment pursuant to its concept of operations.

During their working visit to Bangui on 28 December 2013, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of Defence of the Republic of Congo, and the African Union Peace and Security Commissioner were encouraged by the steps taken by MISCA commanders to redeploy its forces and called for the stigmatization of any contingents within MISCA to be avoided. The Ministers and the Commissioner also stressed the need for continued international support to facilitate the implementation of MISCA's mandate as authorized by resolution 2127 (2013). I also wish to stress that the commanders of MISCA and Operation Sangaris continue to work in coordination and collaboration as they conduct operations to secure the city of Bangui. The calm reported in recent days is the result of the joint action of the two forces.

MISCA is committed to working closely with the various leaders within the Central African Republic.

At the political level, this means encouraging the transitional authorities to work closely together, accelerate the timetable for transition, and launch the necessary process of reconciliation among the various national communities. It also means encouraging them to do what is necessary for the State to resume the effective provision of public services, including effective State control over income sources and the transparent management of public finances.

At a more operational level, MISCA seeks to promote, as far as possible, the return to normal life. From this point of view, I note that on 4 January the head of MISCA held a meeting with the Mayor of Bangui, district and neighbourhoods leaders from Bangui, and representatives of humanitarian agencies with a view to agreeing with them on practical measures to meet the security needs of the population and facilitate the work of the military and the police. A committee was established to monitor the implementation of the measures agreed. One of the immediate results expected is the return of displaced populations, especially those located around the Bangui airport, to their homes.

In the coming days, MISCA will make the most of the current relative calm to step up its implementation of plans to divide and organize Bangui and the rest of Central African territory by sector; to develop strategies to support the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security and defence sector reform; and to consider how to support the electoral process, in coordination with other stakeholders.

The Commission is preparing to deploy an initial group of human rights observers to support MISCA in this area, which is critical to the restoration of justice, public order and State authority. The transitional authorities, including the Prime Minister, have been urged to step up the launch of the work of the judiciary. Similarly, following the discovery in Bangui on 25 December 2013 of a mass grave containing several bodies, a request was sent to the transitional authorities for the public prosecutor to initiate the necessary procedures and conduct adequate investigations into these events.

Similarly, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and MISCA Commander, General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, maintains close collaboration with other members of the international community in Bangui, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic, and the representatives of France, the United States of America and the European Union in order to facilitate coordinated international action on the ground.

It goes without saying that MISCA is operating under difficult conditions. Indeed, the Mission still faces several challenges, linked in particular to the lack of infrastructure in the country, which has made its tasks even more complex, hindered manoeuvres and considerably increased the cost, as well as to the inadequacy of air and land mobility and communications assets.

Let me reiterate here the gratitude of the African Union to the international partners that have been supporting MISCA. I would like to highlight the European Union and the United States, as well as France, with which we are working on the ground. Additional support, both logistical and financial, is still required from the international community. We hope that the donor conference to be held in Addis Ababa on 1 February will be an opportunity for Member States and our partners alike to show their support for MISCA.

We are confident that MISCA can meet the challenges before it. The determination of the African Union is total and the commitment of troop-contributing countries unflinching. MISCA personnel are performing their duties with dedication and a great sense of sacrifice, aware that they are participating in a duty-bound act of African solidarity with a brotherly country and people in distress. As fragile as they may be, the first results on the ground strengthen our conviction that the established goals will be met — just as the African Union has proved to be the case in other theatres of operations, in particular in Somalia — with the extremely valuable support of the United Nations and other international partners.

We believe that the priority for the international community, and of the United Nations in particular, should be to support MISCA so that the Mission can create the minimal conditions for the deployment of a United Nations operation in due course. While the efforts of the African Union and its peace and security structures must also be strengthened, it is also true that a lasting solution to the continent's crises will be possible only by strengthening African capacities. Regardless of their good intentions, our partners will

not always be able to assume the burden of peacekeeping on the continent. In our view, any other approach risks undermining the efforts that MISCA is currently undertaking, with the support of Operation Sangaris, by generating uncertainty, which would undermine the gains already made and complicate the situation on the ground. Such a situation would make any deployment of a United Nations operation more difficult. We therefore expect the Security Council to take this opportunity to strongly reiterate, in line with its previous resolutions, its support for MISCA and the need for all involved to facilitate the implementation of its mandate.

Beyond renewed support for MISCA, the international community, including the United Nations, must redouble its efforts to support the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, security sector reform and the electoral process. Financial assistance is also urgently needed to facilitate a relaunching of economic activity. Of course, I would not want to fail to mention the extremely worrisome humanitarian situation that prevails on the ground. The international community's response to that situation should be much more robust. It is through such concrete actions to respond to the needs on the ground that the international community can usefully contribute to the ongoing work and success of MISCA, which is working on behalf of not only the African Union but also the international community as a whole.

The response to the current crisis is obviously not taking place only on the military and security fronts; in fact, it is fundamentally political in nature. From that point of view, the commitment of the transitional authorities is essential. It is important that they fully shoulder their responsibilities. The efforts they will undertake in the effective conduct of the transition and the contribution they make to MISCA will be crucial to the success of our efforts. The initiatives undertaken by ECCAS, particularly through its acting chairman and the chairman of its committee monitoring the situation in the Central African Republic, namely, Their Excellencies President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad and President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of the Congo, should be strongly supported.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.